

BEATING MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Empowering Stories of Self-Healing and Thriving

AGOTA NAWROTH
& PAIGE NEWSOME

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ISBN: 979-8-218-27971-4

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To my loved ones,

This book reveals the transformative path of my MS journey and daily dedication required for a healthy life. I'm taking care of myself, so you don't have to.

To the multiple sclerosis community,

May our stories empower and inspire, fostering understanding, compassion, and progress. Together, let's navigate the challenges of this journey, knowing that we are never alone.

With love and deepest admiration,
Agota Nawroth

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my deepest gratitude and appreciation to everyone who has contributed to the creation and completion of this book.

First and foremost, I extend my heartfelt thanks to Paige Newsome. Without you, this book wouldn't exist. Your belief in this project, constant motivation, and endless hours of work have been a driving force. You shaped this book in ways I couldn't have imagined.

I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to all the remarkable individuals who graciously shared their heartbreaking stories for this book. Your bravery in opening up about your journeys will undoubtedly resonate with others who find solace and strength in knowing they are not alone. I am honored to have had the opportunity to give voice to your stories and express my deepest appreciation for your invaluable contribution.

Lastly, I extend my gratitude to my followers, readers, and supporters. Your enthusiasm, feedback, and reviews inspire me to continue sharing my story and the knowledge I've acquired along the way with the world, raising awareness about diseases that can be prevented.

To all those mentioned above and the countless others who have contributed in various ways, your presence in my life has made this book a reality. Thank you for being a part of this remarkable journey.

With heartfelt appreciation,
Agota Nawroth

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Many individuals are searching for a diagnosis while struggling with various symptoms. For those of us already diagnosed, having answers can be a relief but also adds a lifelong burden. At times, this weight can feel overwhelming. I wish a book like this had been available when I was first diagnosed four years ago. It would have made a world of difference. Back then, I wouldn't have felt so alone and lost. I wouldn't have had to search through numerous books to connect the dots. My goal with this book is to provide you answers and give you practical guidance to regain control and steer your life back on track.

The stories in this book showcase the remarkable potential within us as human beings. We can heal our minds and bodies, making full recoveries from autoimmune diseases when we cultivate the right mindset and well-being practices. I haven't encountered anyone who thrives with a pessimistic outlook. Our minds are incredibly powerful. It's crucial to remember that the path to healing often begins there. While change can be a challenge, it's a necessary step for those seeking a healthier life.

So, who is this book for? It's not exclusively for people with MS. This book is filled with ideas to improve the lives of anyone, diagnosed or not, who is facing symptoms. Each chapter is a glimpse into someone's life, flourishing despite the diagnosis. My hope is that you'll discover a story or two that resonate with you. Please share this book, help us spread the message, and raise awareness about this complex condition. It doesn't have to lead to life in a wheelchair.

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Final Note

“Wellness is the complete integration of body, mind, and spirit – the realization that everything we do, think, feel, and believe has an effect on our state of well-being.”

– *Greg Anderson*

DISCLAIMER

The stories shared in this book provide personal perspectives and experiences, reflecting individual accounts. These stories should not be construed as professional medical advice or recommendations.

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Story by

MARA REZO-MEDEIROS

Diagnosed in 2004

Currently 41 years old

Lives in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

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I experienced my first flare in the year 2000 while in my first year of university. It happened during first semester exams. I noticed that I had a numb feeling on my left side from the bottom of my breast to the bottom of my feet. I went to my family doctor, and he said it was just a pinched nerve, and it would go away. The numbness lasted about a month. Thinking it was a pinched nerve, I continued with life, not giving it much thought. It came back four months later during exams. This continued happening to me for four years—always around exam time.

It was not until June 2004, when my best friend, Evelin, said, “Enough is enough. We are going to go to the emergency room to get some real answers.” This is when my multiple sclerosis (MS) journey began to take shape. In the emergency room, they asked me questions about my symptoms and told me that they were going to refer me to a neurologist for further testing. Within two weeks, I saw the neurologist, and a month later, I had brain and spinal magnetic resonance imaging (MRI). On

August 24, 2004, my neurologist, Dr. Michael Francis Mazurek, diagnosed me with multiple sclerosis. When he diagnosed me, he said, “You have multiple sclerosis. You will not die from this. This is not cancer. I want you to go home and read the good and the bad about MS, and I want you to come back in two weeks and let me know how you want to proceed.”

So, I did just that. I read the good, the bad, and the ugly. When I finally returned to his office, I told him that I would be the girl who cures herself. He had a big smile on his face and said he would want his own child to say the same. This incredible doctor sat down with me that day, encouraging me to take my own approach to this disease. He helped me learn that my mind is my biggest ally. We also spoke about how I would be starting Teacher’s College in Australia with my best friend in a few months. He said I could not have picked a better career for someone with multiple sclerosis.

After I got diagnosed, my mom obviously called my grandmother who lived in Munich, Germany. My grandmother recommended that she bring me to Germany and then to Croatia to meet her priest who was also a naturopath healer. So, my mom took me to Germany and Croatia for a month. My best friend and my boyfriend at the time also came to support me. We first arrived in Munich in September of 2004. We were there during Oktoberfest. We stayed for nearly two weeks. We did a lot of sightseeing and partying in the beer houses and clubs before heading to Croatia.

When we got to Croatia, we stayed for a week in a house by the Adriatic Sea in the region of Istria. There, we met with the Priest and brought a copy of my MRI scan, which he had requested. He looked at the results, and although I do not recall what he said about the scans, I do remember him saying that we could treat this. Each day, he performed reiki on me and had me take different herbs and supplements that he had compounded into capsules. Unfortunately, after all these years, we have lost touch, and I cannot remember exactly what was in them.

We came back to Canada, and I lived my life normally and left for Australia in January 2005. My parents told me to enjoy my adventure and just live my life as if I did not have MS. I did just that and did not have any more flare-ups because I had figured out that stress was triggering them. I finished Teacher’s College, came back to my hometown, got hired as a French teacher, and have enjoyed a seventeen-year-long career, which I absolutely love.

For most of my time living with multiple sclerosis, I did not really disclose that I had the condition. I continued to do the normal things that women my age did. In 2010, I met my husband. We got married in 2011 and had our son, Niko, in 2015. I chose to have a natural birth with my son because I was told by the anesthesiologist that if I wanted to have an epidural, I had a high chance of exasperating my MS and ending up in a wheelchair, so I chose not to and had my son naturally. I also breastfed him for two years. I felt incredible throughout my pregnancy and after.

In 2018, I gave birth to my daughter. Two months into that pregnancy, I experienced a flare-up; the same flare-up I had had back in my university days. The left side of my body from just below my breast to the bottom of my toes felt numb. It did not affect me in any other way; it just felt strange having a different sensation when touching my left side compared to my right side. I was not nervous or scared at that point because I knew exactly what it was, and I also knew that since I did not have any with my son, the chances were that I was having a girl. This flare-up, like the previous ones, lasted a month.

I gave birth naturally the second time, and because I knew what to expect, I felt much more confident. I would talk to Mia while rubbing my belly every day, telling her that labor was going to be two hours and two pushes. It was a beautiful pregnancy, much like the one I had with my son. About a week before Mia was born, I had my hypnobirthing coach come to my house to give me a quick refresher. She told me that the hospital where I was giving birth had a transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS) machine, and it would be beneficial for me to use it throughout my labor. She was right. My labor was beautiful and smooth. Mia came out in exactly two hours and two pushes with the most beautiful smile.

I believe breastfeeding my daughter for over two years kept my MS at bay. In fact, I exclusively breastfed both of my children for a combined duration of four years and eight months, taking only a four-month break when my son did not want my milk anymore.

When it comes to how I manage my multiple sclerosis, I have decided not to get any more MRIs, and my neurologist agrees with this choice. The thought process behind this is, if they discover more lesions, how will it affect my state of mind? Personally, I do not think I need to know that I have more or that nothing has changed. I think I just need to move forward and continue managing through the struggles I have. It will not make a difference to my journey.

I have never taken any multiple sclerosis medication. I have chosen to take vitamins and supplements (like vitamin D, magnesium, Lion's Mane, and multivitamins), based on my own research and informal recommendations from naturopathic doctors I have seen over the years. I pay attention to how my body is feeling when taking them to see what is working and what is not. I usually take between 5,000 to 10,000IU's of vitamin D daily. It just depends on the season. I forget here and there, but in the summertime, I do not take as much. I did not have my vitamin D levels checked when I was diagnosed because I chose to live my life as if I did not have the disease. I do not know if this was a good thing; it was just how my twenty-three-year-old mind wanted to handle the situation. I have been going to physio, doing Pilates, and following Instagram accounts, like The MS Gym and Dr. Gretchen Hawley, who specialize in physical therapy for multiple sclerosis.

If I can, I buy organic vegetables and fruits. I have also found that dairy, gluten, and sugar affect my body in a negative way. I try to avoid them the best I can. I have not always been strict on my diet. I go through phases: from being really into what I am eating, sticking to no gluten, dairy, or sugar to going into phases where that is all I want to eat. Doing this is probably worse for me as I get older. I always feel better when I cut them out of my diet, but I think that sometimes everyday life, along with any inconvenience, makes me forget, and I cheat. When I am going through these stages, my body feels horrible, and I try to get out of it as fast as I can.

Marijuana is my choice of medicine. I smoke every night once my kids are in bed to relax and help my body rest. It has been my go-to option since I was diagnosed. It works for me, although there can be some negatives. It does give me the "munchies" and depending on the amount I smoke or the THC potency, it can make me a little anxious. After all these years, I have finally figured out that I do best with sativa strains containing lower THC. I also must mention that I am obsessed with healing crystals, particularly rose quartz and amethyst. There is something about them that makes me feel stronger in coping with this disease.

I will say that for most of the time since I have been diagnosed, I have completely ignored this disease. I did not want to read much on it or participate in anything to do with it, like the MS walks and charities. I suppose I never wanted to admit it to myself. However, about three and half years ago, that changed. It happened when I was at my husband's cousin's house, and his wife introduced me to one of her friends. The lady was a former French teacher at the school I currently teach at, and

she also happened to have multiple sclerosis. She asked me if I wanted to join a local group of people with MS who went out for dinner every few months and talked about their experiences. I accepted and went to a few dinners up until COVID ruined everything. Sadly, I lost touch with them all.

Last year, I met a young lady who told me about how she had been diagnosed with MS. I listened to her story, and I believed God had sent her to me, so I could show her that everything was going to be okay. I explained to her that she would also have a great career, get married, and start a family. I wanted her to look at me and know that her diagnosis was not a death sentence—that she would be able to live all her dreams. We have kept in touch since and are always in each other's corners.

Nearly twenty-three years after experiencing my first flare-up and nineteen years since my official diagnosis, I have no regrets in choosing not to take any multiple sclerosis medications. Although it is visible that I have something that is affecting me through a limp when I walk and the weakness I get from walking too long, I think about how blessed I am. I have now lived longer with MS than I have without it. Multiple sclerosis has not stopped me from living a beautiful life: traveling the world, getting married, having children, having amazingly supportive family and friends, pursuing a fulfilling career, and receiving guidance from a wonderful neurologist I have had for the past nineteen years. I want newly diagnosed people to know that they can and will get to live their dreams! It might not be the easiest of paths, but the journey is yours. Trust yourself. You are amazing. XOXO

FINAL NOTE

"Before you heal someone, ask him if he is willing to give up the things that made him sick." -Hippocrates

As we reach the end of this book, I hope these stories have not only inspired you but also encouraged you to take a moment to reflect on your own life. The purpose of this book has been to shine a light on aspects that deserve recognition and change. It's not just about MS or autoimmune diseases; it's a call to awareness, an invitation to slow down and reevaluate our lives.

Our ancestors had wisdom we can learn from, and with today's technology and knowledge, we can create a healthier, more harmonious world, instead of heading down a destructive path. It's as simple as pausing to take a deep breath, enjoying the smell of flowers, and appreciating the beauty that surrounds us.

We hope you've found this book to be a valuable guide. In closing, remember that while healing isn't guaranteed, it's always within reach. The life you choose to lead is firmly in your hands. Join us on **www.BeatingMultipleSclerosis.com** to explore all the limitless possibilities together.